10: d'Orleans--300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 647, 662, 681, 695

"The administrative functionaries and the judges are appointed by the king, subject to the approval of the Siamese Commissioner. Justice is administered according to the traditions of what was known in the early ages as 'the judgments of God.' That is to say the oath is taken upon a silver cup or a sword, and holy water is given the accused to drink, and if the accused person has wrongly declared himself innocent the water will poison him or the sword will be thrust through him by a spirit, at night. It need hardly be said that the judges are not satisfied with this test, that is to say, they take care to inform themselves before the trial as to the fortune of the prisoner, and it is said that they are easily influenced by bribes.

The punishments comprise fines, the bastonade, penal servitude, and being put in chains, but torture is not practised."

It was in this holy place that Anou received /164/ his subjects' 796
and vassals' oaths of fidelity twice a year up until 1827. The 643*
ceremony was continued, after his downfall, in honor of the king 175*
of Siam. Nowadays it takes place in April and November of each
year and the oath, accompanied by prayers from the bonzes, is
addressed to the president of the French Republic in accordance
with the traditional formula: "May any one of us who breaks this /695/
oath be devoured by the tiger, may he be struck by lightning, may
his soul burn in blazing flames... etc." (1).

1. A monastery was recently built near the cloister, which 792
has been transformed into a museum. A center of religious
learning has been revived there by the leader of the bonzes
who is presently in charge of it.

Voyage to Bangkok (1825). In the meantime Anou kept closely 643*
informed of the events which were transpiring in the west of the 648*
Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the south the Siamese had come to 175*
grips with the Annamites in Cambodian territory, and in the north
the British in India were extending their sphere of action towards
Burma in a way which was disturbing for the Thai regions of the
basin of the Salouen and the Upper Menam. In 1825 he went to
Bangkok to attend the funeral of king Phan-Dinh- /165/ /Page 165
is devoted to an illustration: "Square of the temple of Sisaket at
Vientiane."--Translator/ /166/ Klang, and there he learned that
a British delegation had entered into ticklish negotiations with the
government of the deceased king and that the intransigence of the
English was causing the greatest difficulties at the court. He profited
thereby in order to ask permission to repatriate to his country the
Laotian families who had been taken captive in the course of the
preceding century, but was given a categorical refusal (1).

1. He was told that the Laotian families had been settled
in Siam for too long a time not to have become completely
Siamese. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit.
/Repression de la revolte de Vientiane. Bangkok, 1926./

Hiding his disappointment, he regained his capital greatly dis- /721/
contented. The following year, when the rumor reached Vientiane
that the Anglo-Siamese parleys had been broken off and that a

[788
641]

[169] The formula used in southern Laos is more concise and slightly different.

695 The natives of Laos, whatever their race, have a great respect for any oath and stand in much dread of the consequences of perjury.

Oaths are widely used in courts of law in cases of disputes between individuals. When a judge has reached the end of his arguments and is confronted with a stubborn plaintiff he sends him to the pagoda before the sacred statues to deny the accusation or affirm his statements.

In this case, the above formula is modified in accordance with the needs of the case, as regards the object of the oath and the type of authority invoked as sanction. But the basis is always the same.

As a means of legal procedure, an oath is regarded as an argument of such force and of such grave consequences that it is used only as a last resort. In Laos it is the ultima ratio judicium.

805 The Laotian calendar (1). The Laotian year is calculated on the

[792]

(1) Since the bonzes establish the calendar we have thought it well to place this information in the chapter devoted to religion in Laos.

phases of the moon and includes twelve months which are divided into twenty-four half-moons. The months have thirty and twenty-nine days alternately, giving 354 days in the year or eleven days less than in the solar year.

In reality the Laotian calendar is luni-solar, for in order to bring the ordinary year into approximate harmony with the solar year an extra month is inserted every three years after the eighth month, and repeats the latter. It is called the "second eighth month" (Dueune pèt song). In chronological dating, the Laotian year begins about the middle of the fifth month (April).

Like the Siamese, the Laotians have adopted a system for coordinating and numbering their years which is based on a great cycle of sixty years and two other intermediate cycles of ten and twelve years each. The first of these intermediate cycles is decimal, and the second is zodiacal (duodecimal).

[170] Each year is designated first by the name of the great cycle, then by those of each of the intermediate cycles and by a chronological number.

than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (1).

(1) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside.....	6.25 "	
Lighting and upkeep of prison.....		

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes